

With a little advance planning, you can save your pet's life in a disaster.

## Before

**PLAN AHEAD.** In the event of an evacuation, pets may not be allowed inside human emergency shelters. Determine the best place to leave your pet in case of a disaster. Identify an off-site location as well as a place in your home.

**IDENTIFICATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS.** Dogs and cats should always wear properly fitting collars, personal identification, rabies, and license tags. Make sure all the information on the tags is current. Keep a current photo of each pet. Make sure any distinguishing markings are visible. You will need proof of ownership to retrieve your pet from a shelter.

**DISASTER KIT.** Maintain a disaster preparedness supply kit for each of your pets.

**PAPERWORK AND RECORDS.** Store important animal documents in a zip-lock or waterproof plastic bag. These should include vaccination and medical records.

**VACCINATIONS.** Your pets need to be current on vaccinations. You will be required to show proof of vaccination if you need to board your pet.

**TRANSPORTATION.** Each animal should have their own pet carrier. Familiarize your pet with the carrier or cage before an emergency.

**LEASHES AND COLLARS.** Keep a leash handy for each dog and cat in your home. Consider using a harness.

**BUDDY SYSTEM.** In case you are not home when disaster strikes, ask a trusted neighbor to check on your animals. Exchange veterinary information and file a permission slip with your veterinarian authorizing them to get emergency treatment for your pet if you can't be located.

## During

IF YOU TAKE YOUR PET:

Evacuate your pet early, if possible.

Take your disaster preparedness kit, including the pet's vaccination and medical records, as well as identification photographs with you.

IF YOU CAN'T TAKE YOUR PET WITH YOU:

Bring your pet indoors. Do not leave pets chained outdoors.

Prepare a preselected site indoors for your pet. Use a room with no windows but adequate ventilation, such as a utility room, garage, bathroom, or other area that can be easily cleaned. Do not tie them up.

Leave only dry foods and fresh water in non-spill containers. If possible, open a faucet to let water drip into a large container or partially fill a bathtub with water.

Do not leave vitamin treats, which could be fatal if over-eaten.

House cats and dogs separately, even if they normally get along.

### What about pets other than dogs and cats?

Plans for birds and reptiles can be found in the brochure:

Disaster Preparedness for Bird and Reptile Owners

Small mammals, or pocket pets, should be transported in carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered. Remember to take bedding materials. Keep animals in a quiet, safe place.

## After

Pet behavior may change after an emergency. Monitor your pets closely and keep them leashed. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered, causing confusion and abnormal behavior.

Be aware of downed power lines, fallen trees, debris, and local wildlife.

If you find a pet, call animal control or any emergency phone numbers set up after the disaster. Isolate it from your animals until it is returned to its owner, or can be examined by a veterinarian.

IF YOU=VE LOST YOUR PET:

Visit each shelter in your area at least once every other day. You must check the shelter in person; you are the only person who can truly identify your animal. Keep a current photo of your pet showing or describing any distinctive markings.

Create a flyer with your pet-s photo and description, pet-s name, your name and phone numbers where you can be reached.

When you do find your pet, immediately examine it for illness or injuries. Obtain medical attention from your veterinarian if needed. Use caution when handling animals. Panicky or injured animals may bite.

## Practice Your Plan!

Animal Health and Food Safety Services  
Animal Health Branch  
1220 N Street, Room A-107  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916)654-1447  
[www.cdfa.ca.gov](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov)  
dompets.wpd 10/98

## Disaster Preparedness Kit

- ' Pet carrier or cage for each pet
- ' Two week supply of food and water
- ' Non-spill food and water bowls
- ' Medications and dosing instructions
- ' Pet first-aid kit
- ' Vaccination and medical records
- ' Your veterinarian-s information
- ' Cat litter box and litter

- ' Newspaper
- ' Plastic bags for waste disposal
- ' Paper towels
- ' Disinfectants
- ' Leash and collar/harness
- ' Blankets
- ' Toys and treats

Be sure to provide your pets with as many amenities as possible. Remember, they are counting on you for their survival and support!



## Emergency Contact Information

You will need to have your emergency contact information in one easily accessible place. This information is different in every county. By filling in the information below, you will be prepared to reach the key animal disaster resources in your county.

Office of Emergency Services County Animal Coordinator

County Animal Control

California Veterinary Medical Association County Disaster  
Coordinator (Call (916) 344-4985 for your county's contact  
information)

County Agricultural Commissioner

Your Veterinarian

Potential Evacuation Sites

Developed by the State of California, Department of Food and Agriculture, Animal Health and Food Safety  
Services, Animal Health Branch, Animal Care Program, 1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 654-  
1447.



# Disaster Preparedness for Dog and Cat Owners

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Animal Health and  
Food Safety Services  
Animal Health Branch

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